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ABSTRACT

This practicum intervention was designed to increase the academic success of potentially at-risk first graders and train teachers to identify such students. Objectives were to: (1) improve teachers' ability to accurately identify first graders at risk for failing first grade; (2) help parents become knowledgeable about working with at-risk students at home; and (3) increase students' readiness for achievement in first grade. In-service workshops were provided for parents, teachers, and volunteer tutors. Participants had the opportunity to share teaching strategies and techniques, and to use materials that were useful with at-risk students in school and at home. Students were grouped according to deficiencies and provided with activities that addressed their needs. A major element of the intervention was the whole language approach. Practicum evaluation data indicated that outcomes of the intervention were positive. Teachers could successfully identify at-risk students; students showed significant gains in readiness skills; and parent involvement improved. Numerous materials, such as a list of first grade readiness criteria, a parent handbook, outlines of student-parent activities, data, and forms, are provided. (RH)

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Improving Academic Achievement
Of High Risk Students In First Grade
Through Early Identification and Diagnosis

by

Patsy S. Jenkins

Cluster 31

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A Practicum I Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1990

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

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supervisor.

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Also, for their patience and understanding, I am forever indebted to my family.

Patsy Sanson Jenkins

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Abstract

Improving Academic Achievement of High Risk Students in First Grade Through Early Identification and Diagnosis. Jenkins, Patsy S., 1990: Practicum Report, Nova University. Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors:

Academic Achievement / High Risk / Young Children / Dropout Prevention / Potential Dropouts / Disadvantaged Youth / Academic Failure / Knowledge Level / Dropout Identification / Educationally Disadvantaged.

This practicum was designed to increase the academic success of potentially at risk first grade students and to train teachers to be competent in identifying these at risk students. Three specific behavioral objectives were: (1) for teachers to be able to accurately identify first grade students who were at risk of failing first grade; (2) to assist parents in becoming knowledgeable in working with at risk students at home; and (3) increase the readiness for achievement in first grade for a specified group of student.

The writer provided inservice for parents, teachers, and volunteer tutors which gave opportunity to share teaching strategies, techniques, and materials useful in working with at risk students both in school and at home. Students were then grouped according to need deficiencies and provided appropriate activities designed to address the specific skill. The whole language approach was a major factor in this process. Evaluation was an ongoing element of the project.

The results of the program were positive. Analysis of the data indicated that the teachers could successfully identify at risk students and students in the project showed significant gains in readiness skills. The involvement of parents showed the least effective results, however impressive improvements were made.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem of high drop out is one that has plagued the school district in which this practicum is set, for a number of years. In particular, the junior high and senior high schools fed by the selected elementary school have experienced rates above the district average. Factors associated with the setting in which the school is located are socioeconomic and geographic factors commonly associated with high risk students. In keeping with the school district's philosophy that dropout rates are reduced by addressing the needs of the young child at risk, this practicum was undertaken.

Description of Work Setting and Community

The practicum, Improving Academic Achievement of High Risk Students in First Grade Through Early Identification and Diagnosis, was placed in a carefully selected setting. Several factors were used to determine this. The school chosen for the purpose of this study is an inner city elementary school located in a low income, predominately black neighborhood. The community is comprised of low rent houses, industrial outlets, businesses, and a number of establishments that sell liquor. Only through the concerted efforts of school officials and the religious community, have drug free zones been extended to a safer distance from

the school premises. Located in the older part of a city of 146,000 people, the school wages an unending battle with industrial traffic, noise, and other disturbances.

The socioeconomic situation is one that is typical of many cities of the Gulf South. A drop in oil production and price has left the entire area economically depressed with unemployment a common family concern. In the school selected for this practicum, the majority of the families receive partial or total public assistance. Ninety percent of the students in the school participate in the free breakfast and lunch program with an additional 10% paying a reduced breakfast and lunch price. Additionally, an extensive free supplementary nutrition program is implemented during the summer months. This is necessary to insure a nutritional balance for the school's children.

Adverse conditions for students in this setting are further complicated by a high rate of parents who have not graduated from high school and are gravely undertrained for many of today's modern jobs. About 75% of these students come from single parent families and many live with relatives, having neither parent present on a regular basis. Absenteeism at the school district is average, while parental involvement is below other kindergarten through grade five schools in the district.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

This writer works closely with the target school and has done so for the last five years. Being in the school on a weekly, and often daily basis has provided valuable insight into some of the problems experienced by both the on site administrator and his staff. As an elementary instructional supervisor, the writer is responsible for working with the principal, teachers, and instructional aides to insure the maximum use of instructional time for the benefit of students in the school. Through inservices for both principals and teachers, this writer had the opportunity to address issues including curriculum and staff development, attitudes of the professional staff toward students at risk, new and innovative teaching strategies, and general issues that effect the learning environment in the school. When specific problems arise in either instructional procedures or pupil progress, helping visits are made by the writer for the purpose of working with teachers to determine appropriate intervention and/or remedial measures. A final responsibility of this writer is conferring with parents, either in person or by telephone, to assist in working out any problems that may exist concerning their child.

CHAPTER 11

Study of the Problem

Problem Description

The school district involved in this study has an excessively high drop out rate. The district, located in the center of the state, in many ways exemplifies small town lifestyles. This is not to imply that the area has been exempt from the problems and pressures of the nation in general. Substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, parental unemployment, and lack of parental involvement in the public schools, are all as prevalent in this system as in other public school systems throughout the nation. These conditions are all found to be contributing factors in excessive school drop out rates (Nichols, 1989).

A careful study of the school district's drop out problem by central office staff members found that while the overall dropout rate was high, no concerted effort was being made by the individual schools in the district to combat this problem. At best, individual teachers were initiating programs and/or limited intervention strategies existed within single classroom units.

This lack of coordinated effort, contrasted by an overwhelming need, led the local school board to include in its 1989-90 list of overall board objectives the following as one of the district wide goals: During the 1989-90 school year the superintendent, working the the appropriate

directors, shall appoint a committee at the primary, elementary, junior and senior high levels to develop a comprehensive plan to meet the needs of the high risk student and to reduce the drop out rate by said plan.

It is of significance to this practicum to note that both a primary and an elementary committee was formed to analyze the problems of drop outs and high risk students. All previous attempts to solve the high drop out rate have targeted the senior high population with only scattered attempts to reach junior high students.

Difficulties encountered because of the high school district's drop out rate are numerous. First and most obvious is the problem of untrained, partially literate individuals who are virtually unemployable. Since many unemployed people must turn to public assistance for survival, the expense to the local and state tax structure becomes tremendous. Another factor to consider is that unemployed youth tend to become involved with undesirable associates and often fall victim to substance abuse, which directly or indirectly leads to involvement with crime. The list of encountered difficulties and persons affected by the drop out problem seems unending.

A careful review of recent literature revealed a direct link between young children who are at risk and receive no special interventions and children who drop out of school at the earliest possible age.

In conclusion, the problem addressed in this practicum was the lack of early identification and diagnosis of high risk students in the primary grades.

Problem Documentation

In a report to the Education Committee of the district school board, the Superintendent of Schools made the following statement:

The administrators and teachers in the public school systems of 49 states have developed and implemented curriculums and programs which are more successful in preventing drop outs than those developed and implemented by district school administrators in [the state], which has the nation's highest drop out rate -- an unbelievable 46%. [The state's] educators must shoulder this responsibility and examine their personal and professional heritage and that of their school district community for answers and solutions.

It is my belief that a basic change in philosophy and attitude on the part of the educators is absolutely necessary before [the state] can lower its drop out rate. The students who drop out are not leaving their parents, churches, friends, jobs, or communities. They are leaving the public schools which are operated and controlled by administrators and teachers. The philosophy, atmosphere, spirit, quality, and fairness of the school are determined by those in control (Nichols, 1989).

It is from this perspective that a district wide study was made of drop out rates. This study revealed the 1988 district drop out rate of 45.0%. The senior high school where the students from this practicum will attend had a 60% drop out rate for this period. The study also revealed the number one reason for leaving school was adjustment problems with educational problems rating a close second. A careful

longitudinal study of 266 drop outs from the district revealed that low grades, those grades of C, D, or F were present as a pattern throughout 46.3% of the students' school years and poor attendance because of stated dislike for school was present in 70.3% of the students studied (see Table 1).

To further document the problem and relate it to the school used for this practicum the test scores from the SRA Survey of Basic Skill, Level 20, Form P were examined. For students leaving kindergarten to enter first grade, the total reading score was 0.9 or exactly on grade level for a district average. However, for the school used in this practicum, the composite reading total was 0.1, well below the district level. The students were equally low in each component of the test: auditory discrimination, letters and sounds, decoding, and listening comprehension.

For first grade students ending the 1988-89 school year, SRA test scores for the school used in this practicum placed the composite reading score at 1.6 grade equivalent, also well below the 2.2 grade equivalent score for the district composite.

Finally, the reading placement test for the beginning of the 1989-90 school year placed 30% of the incoming first grade students in the school below grade level.

Table 1

Relationship of Attendance and Academic Achievement

Records were available for 266 students.

There is a distinct correlation between attendance and academic achievement.

ATTENDANCE

Total number of students	-	266	
Poor Attendance	-	187	- 70.3%
Average Attendance	-	55	- 20.7%
Above Average	-	24	- 9.0%

GRADES*

Total number of Students	-	266	
Low Grades	-	123	- 46.3%
Fair Grades	-	91	- 34.2%
Average Grades	-	52	- 19.5%

*Legend	-	Grades
Low	-	F
Fair	-	D
Average	-	C

Causative Analysis

The term at risk is not new to the educational community, yet a concise definition has not been developed and perhaps should not be. For the purposes of this practicum the definition is purposely vague. Students may be at risk because they enter school with specific auditory, visual, or other developmental lags. Students may be at risk because the linguistic opportunities in their daily lives are very limited and they lack the necessary background and experiences in receptive and expressive language. Students may be at risk because they lack the necessary social/emotional skills to function semi-independently in a group setting such as a classroom. Finally, students may be at risk because the school program is inappropriate for them either in its approach or in its difficulty level (Karweit, 1987).

Based on numerous local studies of the drop out problem in area schools, four factors appear to be major determinants in at risk students becoming drop outs.

The first of these determinants was low academic achievement. SRA test results for kindergarten students for the 1988-89 school year revealed a mean national percentile of 19, well below other kindergarten classes in the district. It was with these children, the first graders of 1989-90, that this practicum worked (see Table 2).

When these students entered first grade 30% scored

Table 2

SRA Test Results for the Year 1988-89

Grade K

REPORTED IN MEAN NATIONAL
PERCENTILE

SCHOOL AVERAGE	RANK IN DISTRICT	51
S-1	25	32
S-2	5	64
S-3	1	73
S-4	8	60
S-5	10	58
S-6	3	68
S-7	17	44
S-8	11	57
S-9	2	70
S-10	6	62
S-11	15	47
S-12	14	51
S-13	21	38
S-14	22	38
S-15	4	67
S-16	19	42
S-17	12	55
S-18	24	35
S-19	9	59

*S indicates schools in alphabetical order

below grade level on the reading placement for the district's adopted reading series. Further, 41% of the students missed more than 10% of the items on the Criteria for Readiness For First Grade Curriculum Checklist (School Board, 1982).

A second determinant in the at risk student becoming a drop out was poor attendance and discipline problems. As noted earlier in this practicum, a study was done locally on 266 students who had dropped from school during the 1987-88 school year. Stating from the report findings there was a distinct correlation between attendance and academic achievement.

Personality and adjustment problems are another major determinant for the at risk student at any age. Characteristics observed by teachers to be consistently present in the maladjusted young student are inability to care for belongings, not knowing self-help skills such as going to the bathroom alone, carrying a food tray, and using a fork properly, unable to work independently, and unable to get along with other children by sharing, taking turns, and other social practices.

The fourth determinate is students entering school disadvantaged by low socio-economic home environments. As described in the opening remarks of this study, the school is located in an older, economically deprived section of the city and draws its student population from this area.

Ninety-five percent of the students participate in the free breakfast and lunch program at school and an additional 4.5% eat both meals at a reduced price. According to a study of student folders, 85% of the student population comes from a home having only one parent present. Of this 85%, an appalling 30% see neither parent on a regular basis.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of literature on at risk and drop out students revealed that a great variety of researchers and practitioners from many and varied backgrounds and areas of interest have contributed to the growing body of knowledge and understanding about effects of early intervention to help children succeed in school. Early childhood educators have provided much of the foundation for intervention research from simple observations made as they have examined characteristics of at risk children during the early years.

In a study of whole language instruction, Gunderson and Shapiro (1988) found that in first grade whole language instruction was very beneficial in building developmental skills necessary for success in that grade. Whole language programs for teaching reading and other language arts programs introduce the child to literacy in the classroom in a holistic and natural manner. This approach to instruction requires a great deal of individual student teacher interaction and in this respect is similar to individualized

education.

After having been in a whole language approach program the above study found students had made tremendous growth in their writing ability, they had learned to spell correctly and read a huge number of words, they were learning phonics skills, and were much more communicative in general.

Research generally supports the concept that in its earliest stages education for the younger child should consist of a curriculum that begins with heavy emphasis on the experimental and proceeds to more formal and abstract tasks (Slaughter and Haussler, 1984). Thomas (1982) reveals that effective intervention, successful parent involvement, curriculum development and evaluation rank high as factors which may rescue young children, even infants, who are at risk. In categorizing programs with effective curriculum development, programs based on the principles of Piaget and Bruner both attempt to facilitate development through systematic provision of specific experiences generally proved more successful. It has been amply demonstrated that motor, perceptual and cognitive functioning, as well as personal social attributes can be accelerated in children at many age levels and of all social and ethnic groups.

Thomas (1982) states the findings of research are quite clear on the benefits of inclusion of the family in early childhood intervention programs. The family is the critical social institution for early development; parental attitudes

to child rearing practices, parental language styles and attitudes to achievement, play the most significant part in determining the child's future response to learning. Findings indicate that programs directly involving parents as auxiliaries in a formal way have more lasting effects than those where parents are mere observers. Not all families are capable of supplying a supportive environment for children so programs must not be based on strong family intervention alone.

Stevens (1982) provided reinforcement for the theory that teachers' ratings and observations are valuable tools in locating the at risk student early in his/her school career. Such studies lend credibility to the teacher's ability to determine a child to be at risk from observing classroom behavior and carefully studying student record folders.

A study done in 1988 by Lehr stresses that at risk students should be identified early during their formative years, and that social and academic programs should be implemented as early as possible. This early identification of the at risk student is not to be confused with the labeling of students that often leads to degrading treatment. In Lehr's study the efficacy of early intervention was investigated in numerous research studies. The immediate benefits from these programs were improved cognitive, language, motor and social-emotional growth for

the children. Although researchers often approach the study of early intervention in different ways, they are in agreement that early intervention is most effective.

In her study of children with learning disabilities of any type, Gray (1988) found that specific problems develop during the difficult process of learning to read.

Academically at risk students are more likely to have problems with word ordering, word endings, word meanings and relationships, word retrieval, and the appropriate use of language in social settings. She states that these children would benefit from rich language environments in their classrooms from an early age. Gray states that once the student has discovered that the written symbols represent the spoken sounds and has memorized these symbols, he or she can decode previously unencountered words, thus learning to read.

Karweit's (1987) study of effective kindergarten program pronounced one of the major tasks of kindergarten is to get students ready to read and compute. It is thus necessary, she further states, to fully understand what readiness in these areas mean and what steps must be taken in first grade if readiness is not attained. The skills found to be necessary for reading readiness are auditory skills, (beginning consonants and sound-letter correspondence), visual skills (visual matching and finding patterns), and language skills (school language and

listening). While some of these skills may not seem directly related to reading, it must be remembered that learning to read requires calling upon a complex combination of visual, auditory and kinesthetic skills.

One recent study (Losey, 1986) found through informal assessment that many students were entering kindergarten at risk of failure and that this fact was not being formally communicated to parents. Losey further found that the lack of readiness skills was not effectively remediated in far too many cases and the child, therefore, entered first grade even more at risk. His study recommended the use of a simple, rather informal check list to be used to determine strengths and weaknesses in readiness skills so that they may be properly addressed. His study used volunteer tutors to assist classroom professional in accomplishing this goal.

Phlegar's (1987) study also provides an overview of some of the issues concerning the early identification and treatment of young children at risk of failing in school. She feels that the question of how "to assist" at risk children through early identification and appropriate programs must be continually informed by the ongoing study of how different children learn best. Her work calls for professionals to better access the potential of all children and to define more broadly the definition of potential. As an outgrowth of the study, Phlegar stressed the recommendation that top priority in early education, pre-K

through 3, to language activities such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

One Oregon school district study (Pheasant, 1985) developed a readiness program to help children who have been found to be at risk in a regular first grade program. The study found that while at risk students have academic difficulties, with altered teaching methods, many of them are able to learn. These students are often disorganized and need assistance in planning and goal-setting, they are often inattentive and easily distracted with short attention spans. To be effective, teachers must use a variety of teaching materials and strategies to keep their interest. Since many low achievers also have a negative self-image, supportive learning environments can help build more positive self-esteem.

At risk students are often very dependent. They have not been successful in enough experiences to enable them to rely on and trust their own abilities. They may be discipline problems unless the classroom setting is positive enough to combat this. The narrow range of interest exhibited by many at risk students often relates to their socioeconomic level. Communication with parents is paramount in solving this problem. Because some at risk students lack social skills, it is mandatory for them to acquire these skills by structuring their environment to facilitate more peer interaction. Finally, the study found

some at risk students so afraid of failing that they would not even try the task given to them.

Significant differences were found among race/ethnicity categories in a recent study of the at risk-drop out connection. Tanner (1989) identified low socioeconomic conditions as the major cause of children at risk and ultimately becoming a drop out. One of the most important achievements of education research in recent years has been the identification of characteristics of schools successful in working with children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Schools are said to be effective in this area when they raise the achievement and morale of poor children and children of ethnic groups who could no longer be identified in a set of test results. Overall, Tanner found that schools with a majority of black students experience higher rates of risk cases.

In keeping with this line of research, Phlegar (1987) identified diverse cultural backgrounds and limited English speaking skills as causes of children being at risk. She found drastic demographic changes have contributed to increased numbers of students who exhibit at risk characteristics. More young children today come from homes with two working parents, live in households with only one parent, or with a parent or parents who are still children themselves. Forty percent of all identified poor persons in the United States are children, although children make up

only 27% of the total population. The study also found Blacks and Hispanics comprise a disproportionate share of those below the poverty line.

Some problems arise directly from low socioeconomic homes in greater numbers. These include attendance and discipline problems, limited English proficiency, unstable home factors, little value placed on completion of school, and negative self-concept, to name only a few.

Dr. Raj Chopra, speaking at the First Annual At Risk Student Conference in 1988, identified specific causes of at risk students. For the younger child some of the more common characteristics are truants, underachievers, behavior problems, economically disadvantaged, non or limited English speakers, migrants, low self-esteem, and children with no parental support.

Characteristics of homes that produce at risk children are those having generational poverty, latchkey, filled with fear and/or ignorance, single parent, drug and substance abuse, violence, poor nutrition, and a crisis atmosphere most of the time.

Chopra continues that as a result of this type of environment children learn early to see themselves as failures, passive, patronized, defensive, discouraged, do not care attitude, low self-esteem, distrustful of adults, lonely, arrogant, and "different" from other children.

A thorough literature review revealed much debate on

the issue of how much and what kind of academics should be stressed for young students, as well as techniques that are most age appropriate. This proved especially true in literature written specifically to address the needs of the young at risk student. Much support can be found for education of the young child to consist of a curriculum with heavy emphasis on the experimental and proceed to the more formal and abstract educational processes. The whole language approach exemplifies this concept. Research also documents the importance of the inclusion of parents in this process. Early identification of the student who is socially, emotionally, and/or academically at risk is found to be another factor in determining the content and technique appropriate for young children. This identification at an early stage is of paramount importance to the eventual success of such a student. Research tends to focus upon early identification coupled with effective education programs for young children as a means of making significant differences in improving academic achievement for the young at risk student.

CHAPTER III

Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

It is with growing emphasis on the nature of young children that a host of professionals, from child growth and development specialists to primary grade teachers and pediatricians are measuring the achievement of young students. Whether they are happy, secure, and feel good about themselves is now known to do far more in determining the child's eventual academic success or failure than will his being force-fed academics at an extremely early age. Hence, six year-olds who concede defeat and suffer bruised self-images or youngsters who succeed but do so under heavy pressure will ultimately find a way to physically and/or mentally drop out of school. Either way, this at risk child loses.

The general goal of this practicum was to increase the academic success of two groups of at risk first grade students during three months of the 1989-90 school year. Another more specific goal was to train two first grade teachers in the writer's school district to be competent in identifying at risk students. The next goal of the project was to help 11 parents of at risk students become knowledgeable in how to work with an at risk student at home. The final goal of the project was to increase 11 students' readiness for achievement in first grade.

Behavioral Objectives

This practicum had three specific behavioral objectives. By the end of the practicum, two first grade teachers were able to identify at risk first grade students to the degree of 80% accuracy of the classroom at risk list as evaluated by the degree of accuracy of the list of children who are at risk in the class that appeared on the teacher made list.

The second objective was for 11 parents or parent substitutes to become knowledgeable in how to work with an at risk student at home as evaluated by a weekly checklist of activities done by students and parents. The achievement of a standard of 80% was projected. This denoted that 80% of the parents who began the activity were still completing activities with the students at the end of the practicum.

The third and final objective was to increase the readiness for achievement in first grade for 11 at risk students and evaluated for readiness through the use of the Criteria For Readiness For First Grade Curriculum to a standard of achievement of no more than 10% of the items on the checklist being marked for lack of achievement.

Measurement of Objectives

The degree of accuracy of the list of children who were at risk in each first grade classroom served as an evaluative instrument for the measurement of the teachers'

ability to identify at risk students. Students who were new to the class during the time table of the project and identified as at risk and students in the class who become at risk during the practicum were also added to the class list. These activities by the teachers further validated their ability to identify at risk first grade students.

The second evaluative tool of this practicum was a weekly checklist of activities done by students and parents at home and measured changes in the behavior of both the parents and the students in relationship to the students' school work. The checklist was kept by this writer as an ongoing record of activities in which parents participated with their child. An increase in activities was determined to be increased knowledge on the part of the parent in how to help their at risk student at home.

The third objective of the practicum was measured by the use of the Criteria For Readiness For First Grade Curriculum and assessed its appropriateness in determining school readiness. The Criteria For Readiness For First Grade was locally developed as a screening instrument and used by the local school district in which the schools for the project were located. The screening device was administered to all first grade students. For the purpose of this practicum any student missing more than 10% of the items was considered to be at risk of failure by not being ready for the first grade curriculum. A readministering of

the test constituted a measurement of increase in skills necessary for achievement in the first grade curriculum.

In the area of at risk students' identification by the first grade teachers, the accepted standard of achievement was 80% accuracy of the classroom list of at risk students. In order to insure the teachers' ability to identification, orientation and staff meetings with the on site administrator and this writer were held on a weekly basis and more often if the teachers or the writer felt there was need. In these meetings, topics discussed, problems, and other pertinent information was documented in a weekly log by this writer.

In the area of increased parental knowledge of how to work with at risk students, the acceptable standard of achievement was for 80% of the parents to continue to complete activities with their children at the end of the practicum. These activities were monitored by a weekly checklist of completed activities by parents and students.

The final standard of achievement to be addressed in this practicum was the measurement of students' readiness for achievement at the level appropriate for mid-semester of first grade. At the end of the three months allotted for this practicum, 11 students who were originally classified as at risk of failure in first grade were to have no more than 10% of the items on the Criteria For Readiness For First Grade Curriculum checked, an indication of increased

readiness for first grade skills.

Because of the nature of educational studies and especially studies involving human participants, provisions must be made for recording unexpected events, outcomes, and/or occurrences. To accommodate these events, the writer kept a weekly log for each classroom participating in the study. The log described progress (or lack of progress) of teachers, parents, and pupils and also recorded concerns or changes in methods and techniques used with the students. These logs were reviewed weekly to determine needed changes in the processes used or to note any unexpected occurrences.

The weekly log kept on each student played a significant role in analyzing the results of the practicum. Through the use of this instrument, results were monitored and analyzed from the first week until the practicum ended. Comparisons were made continually for signs of progress as measured by the students degree of improvement in ability to perform the tasks listed on the Readiness For First Grade Curriculum Checklist.

Additional analysis was conducted to determine the parents' knowledge of how to work with the at risk first grader. This data was collected from review sheets sent home for the parents each week on which they indicated what type of activities they had participated in with their child and how much time was spent in this activity.

A final area to be analyzed was the teachers' ability

to identify at risk students. This data could not be analyzed until the end of the practicum. At that time, a comparison was made of the original list of students identified by the teacher and the number of students found to actually be at risk and benefited from the practicum. Students showing signs in the early weeks of not actually needing the program were removed from the practicum and appropriately indicated on the teacher's list of students.

At the end of the practicum, a comparison in reading test scores using the publishers' test of the school districts' adopted series for first grade curriculum documented the degree of improvement of each student.

CHAPTER IV

Solution Strategy

Description and Evaluation of Possible Solution

Readiness is of preponderant importance at any stage of learning but never more so than at the beginning of a child's academic life, entering first grade. A careful review of recent literature disclosed a number of techniques and methods that could be used by primary level teachers to strengthen the skills necessary to a child's success in first grade. Possible solutions to improving academic achievement of high risk students in primary grades present a number of viable strategies.

The first step toward any solution strategy is accurate identification. Accurate identification of the potentially at risk student would allow for early intervention and avoid more extensive problems later in the educational process. Gray (1988) researched early identification and remediation of at risk preschool, first, and second grade children to determine factors that would prevent possible future reading failure. Several elements of the study were significant to the practicum of this writer. Gray found that predicting reading performance required effective screening programs to identify potential reading achievement problems. Early intervention was found to be very significant in the prevention of failure.

In a position paper, Abramson (1983) discussed the

theoretical and empirical issues in early identification of children at risk educationally. Three areas related to the design and implementation of early identification programs were addressed: (a) reliability of early identification procedures, (b) validity of early identification measures, and (c) implications of early identification. According to Abramson (1983), accurate early identification depends on two factors, the screening procedure and the personal characteristics that teachers may see in children that would not be identified by a screening test. Based upon this statement, schools should keep accurate records of the number of children identified as being at risk and monitor the effectiveness of the program over a period of time to determine changes, if any, that need to be made in either factor.

Because of the wide variety of learning styles and teaching methods that must be incorporated to meet the varying needs of at risk students, an eclectic approach to solution strategies was employed. Use of a variety of organized learning games and exercises was integrated with more structured remedial procedures to develop deficient skills in sensory, gross motor, and other skills related to school readiness and success. Addressing various learning styles is necessary to be effective in overcoming the deficits in reading performance as well as the influences of neurological immaturity and disadvantaged backgrounds. It

should be noted that there is disillusionment in some education circles with the screening of young children to identify those at risk. On the other hand, failure to provide help early enough to children who develop serious learning problems may ultimately cost heavily in terms of money, time and effort, not to mention suffering of students, teachers, and parents. Many researchers are in agreement as to the benefits of early identification and remediation (Abramson, 1983).

Losey (1986) identified four elements necessary to improve first grade success for students who are considered to be high risk students. These four basic elements became part of the strategy employed by this writer. First, there was an increase of 60 minutes per day of one-on-one instructional time for high risk students. During this time volunteer tutors worked with those students previously identified. Instructional materials and assignments were provided for their use. Materials were selected to meet the specific need of the individual student based on deficient skills revealed in the readiness screening.

Next, a concerted effort to improve student attendance was made. Assigned students responsibilities or "classroom jobs" was one phase of the plan. Veteran teachers easily recognize the value of making a child feel important and giving him/her something to which he can look forward in getting children to want to attend school. A small reward

was given on a weekly basis for students who had attended every day for a week.

Losey's third factor in improving first grade success was the increase in time for individual instruction and assistance. During this writer's practicum, the use of volunteer tutors served to alleviate this problem in two ways. First, tutors were available to assist the child when additional assistance was needed after the teacher had initially presented the lesson. They were also available to further explain or reinforce concepts presented in the instructional period. In the second phase of this strategy, the volunteer tutors were available to perform routine tasks for the average and above student, releasing the teacher to spend more one-on-one instructional time with the at risk youngster.

The final element with with Losey found he must deal was children being young at the point of school entry in relation to peers. Since children may have attained the chronological age to enter first grade without having attained the necessary developmental age, students demonstrating this particular problem were provided for in small group or individual settings. The students experiencing delayed development received exercises to increase skills in gross motor refinement and initial fine motor development. Further development of socialization was enhanced through organized and creative play activities.

role playing and the use of similar socializing techniques.

Studies by Phlegar (1987) have provided a wealth of information and materials to assist schools and communities in facilitating young childrens' success in school. She extensively reviewed early identification techniques and treatment of the young child at risk of failing. Effective curriculum and intervention programs must be designed to meet social and emotional needs as well as learning styles. Research generally supports the idea that primary education curriculum should begin with heavy emphasis on the experimental and proceed to more formal and abstract tasks. The timing and rate of this transition should depend on the abilities of the child.

Coupled with the experimental base is the idea that how children feel about themselves and others provides the foundation for future learning. In keeping with the above cited research, skill building activities in this practicum whether cognitive or kinesthetic, began with activities with which the child was familiar and could do well and proceeded through structured learning tasks in small sequential steps. By experiencing success, at risk students were motivated to want to learn more.

In addition to the traditional academic activities the following activities were included in the plan of solution strategies:

- a. "Pick of the Week" -- Recognize the student for

academic and behavioral improvements during each week of the curriculum.

- b. Student Lunch Table -- Students who have accomplished designated short term objectives during the week were to sit with the principal in a place of honor at lunch each Friday.
- c. Student Work Display -- The teacher displayed some of each child's best work in the classroom and in hallways.
- d. Students were greeted each morning by name by the teacher and another designated adult.
- e. Be a Cheerleader -- At various times, the teacher selected a student to wear the cheerleader ribbon for being helpful to other students and demonstrating a cheerful attitude.

In her research on at risk, low-achieving students in the classroom, Hare (1988) found that at risk students should be identified early during their years of formative education, and social and academic enrichment programs should be implemented as soon as possible. In keeping with her findings and as an integral part of this practicum, teachers communicated high but attainable expectations to the students. Emphasis on the development of the total child was attained through use of creative play, attention to the emotional needs of the students and using games to teach basic socialization skills. Social living activities

were specifically planned to compensate for a lack of socialization skills taught in the economically deprived home setting. School newsletters to parents included suggested activities that would help reinforce the development of these socialization skills. Additionally, "homework" assignments were given that would involve parents and students interacting. An example was to have the child locate a can or box that had one reading/spelling word on it and bring the container to school. Parents were asked to share in this assignment.

Losey (1986) cited early in this paper, identified objectives for a successful program for young children considered to be at risk and described the benefits of tutors to increase instructional time. As aptly stated in her paper, "What better can you give a child than individual attention?"

Each of the classrooms used for this practicum had one classroom teacher and one instructional aide as well as one volunteer tutor. All direct instruction was given by the teacher with reinforcement and/or reteaching activities, learning games, and activities to build gross and fine motor skills carried out by the aide and tutor. Students worked in small groups of two or three when deficient skills were common to the group or in one-on-one settings where the need was demonstrated. Since the underlying philosophy of the practicum was that success breeds success, students were

recognized and/or rewarded frequently. The project's aim was to build esteem and confidence because this writer believes, as do these cited researchers, that is the key to learning.

One recommendation that is given top priority in early childhood education, pre-K through grade 3, is to place renewed emphasis on language (speaking, listening, reading and writing) to ensure that all students have a solid foundation from which to pursue a common core of learning in years following. A whole language development program benefits pupils deficient in the area of language development. In studies of new techniques using the whole language approach to language development, Atiwerger (1987) determined a significant benefit to pupils deficient in the area of language development. This instruction follows the assumption that students can speak about what they have experienced, write about that which they have spoken, and read about that which they have written. Student authorship at each of the primary levels is a requisite.

For the purposes of this practicum, students were given instruction that was individualized and some that took place in small groups. The child's attention was focused on the communication function of language rather than its form. The importance of the child's own language was used to produce a bridge from oral to written language. The use of skill sequences to organize instruction as mandated by the

basal reader was down-played until the child had demonstrated readiness for this strategy. The child's own experiences, spoken and finally written, served as the basis of instructional material rather than teaching individual and sound-symbol relationships in isolation. These sound-symbols as presented in the adopted basal were taught as students progressed toward readiness for this stage. Experience charts generated by the children's dictation were a major part of instruction, especially that done by the instructional aide and/or the volunteer tutor. Role playing and the use of puppets were used to release shy or uncommunicative students to speak freely of their own experiences.

Another departure for the purposes of this practicum was placing greater emphasis on the child's own writing using invented spelling when appropriate. Emphasis upon writing was delayed until students had mastered a corpus of sight words.

Yet another departure from traditional instruction included the setting in which instruction took place. Initially, underachievers often require an informal design in setting. They find it difficult to sit on wooden or plastic chairs for more than a few minutes, therefore, carpet pads, bean bags, and student made "sit-upons" provided a more conducive setting for instructional and tutorial sessions. Some sessions took place in various

parts of the school. In general, the setting was changed as needed to assist in generating additional experiences for the students.

The whole language technique produces positive results in young students who are determined to be academically at risk (Goodman, 1986). This method of instruction works well with the child who is severely delayed in reading, who has experienced conventional instruction but has not learned to read. Reacting to repeated failure, the disable reader generally dislikes and avoids reading tasks and books. The whole language approach, however, can give this reader success in activities with written words because it capitalizes on the child's interests, language, and knowledge of the world and because it involves procedures and activities that are not like those in the materials the child used previously.

Whole language teaching methods for the at risk or disable reader provided one-on-one individualized instruction and is usually best used by a tutor or aide. The method advances the at risk child in areas of increased use of the classroom library and helps the child make the transition to basal readers in addition to acquiring reading skills. The method also serves as one form of informal assessment of progress as well as provides for individual differences.

In a project that provided language enriched

communicative skills, Slaughter (1984) obtained results that showed that students had achieved a statistically raw score gain in reading and writing. In the project where supplementary instruction in oral language development was implemented in small groups, reading and writing success for the involved student improved.

In this writer's practicum, where there exists a severe lack of language experiences in the homes of the students participating, it was first necessary to build a background of experiences sufficient for the student to be successful in school. Through the whole language approach, background can be established while language arts skills are being developed.

As the problem of the at risk student is analyzed by professionals two basic issues come into focus: first, the way to help the at risk student and second, the need for more effective communication between parents and the school professionals must be addressed (Sasserath, 1983). Parental involvement in their child's school helps parents better understand the at risk child as well as continue the development of skills at home. When interventions include the parents as part of the strategy, the intervention is more effective in helping the child at risk.

Alexander and Lovelace (1988) designed a successful program for children with developmental lags that involved parents in improving the child's social, emotional, and

readiness skills. In the project, parents were interviewed to establish commitment to the project, workshops were provided for parents and suggested parent-child activities were sent home on a regular basis. The success of this program verified the importance of using parental involvement as a major part of the solution strategy when working with the at risk student.

In work done by Hare (1987), a guide was developed to educate parents on the various phases of child growth and development that directly influenced readiness for reading and first grade success. Some of the areas addressed by Hare were to acquaint parents with realistic age-level expectations for the child, to help parents understand the importance of maintaining a quality learning environment for children in the home, to help parents better understand their role as supporters of their child's education, and to help parents better understand their importance as their child's first teacher.

Presenting to the World Congress on Future Special Education, McKenna (1978) outlined some proven benefits of family involvement in intervention programs for at risk children. McKenna found that many programs, based on the work of Piaget and Bruner, attempted to facilitate development through systematic provision of specific experiences. It has been amply demonstrated that motor, perceptual, and cognitive functioning, as well as personal-

social attributes can be accelerated in children at various age levels and of all social and ethnic groups. Again, the active involvement of parents in such programs is stressed. The family is the critical social institution for child development with parental attitudes to childrearing practices and parental language styles and attitudes to achievement playing the most significant part in determining the child's future responses to learning experiences.

It is from this perspective that parental involvement was determined to be a major component of this practicum.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

The basic solution strategy for the purpose of this practicum was to provide direct instruction in a variety of ways that would best meet the needs of the students involved. The solution to the problem of improving academic achievement of high risk students in primary grades through early identification and diagnosis is based on various techniques that have been described previously in this paper. By using a meshing of these techniques in a conscientious manner, teachers, instructional aides and volunteer tutors attempted to remediate each student in the skill area where deficiencies were shown to the extent of putting the student at risk. Each of these techniques was adapted to meet the needs of the individual student within the two classrooms participating in the practicum. These

particular techniques were selected because of the success cited in the research reviewed. It was the belief of this writer that the solutions proposed in this paper were appropriate for the problem found in the particular work setting.

This writer tried a variety of techniques which could increase the skill development of at risk first grade students. The first step in the overall solution strategy was to meet with the principal, teachers, and instructional aides to outline and summarize the program in which they were to be involved. They were made aware of statistics on causes and rates of drop outs for the school district in which they work, as well as research findings regarding the various strategies used in the practicum.

Because only two teachers were involved in the practicum and both were located in the same school, the writer met with the teachers at their planning time and at any additional time when the need arose. Both the principal and teachers were encouraged to contact the writer for additional assistance at any time. Each meeting was utilized for discussing the particular technique being used and for exploring methods of implementing the designated techniques. These sessions were also used as a method of continuous evaluation of each pupil's progress or lack of progress with possible changes in methods and techniques. Teacher input constituted a major role in the decision

making process of the practicum where matching a child's needs to a particular teaching strategy was involved. The teachers were also encouraged to bring comments and observations about students' attitudes toward school, ability to interact with other students, and other socialization skills to these meetings for discussion.

The second technique for the improvement of academic achievement was the early identification of students potentially at risk. Since early identification is a major factor in preventing failure in potentially at risk students, each classroom was monitored after initial testing to determine if additional students should be added to the project. While the Criteria For Readiness For First Grade Curriculum (Appendix A) and the MacMillan Reading Test scores were major sources of identifying at risk students, teacher observation also played a role in the identification process. Students involved in the practicum were constantly re-evaluated and monitored for possible movement into or out of the project.

Whole language development instruction was used for those students with immature language development. Based on the literature review of this writer, teachers were encouraged to carefully analyze all instructional techniques used to determine: (a) How the need of the student could best be met? (b) What activity would stimulate the student to learn more effectively the deficient skills? (c) Was the

activity constructed in such a manner as to insure at least some degree of success for the student? (d) Was there enough reinforcement of the skill to ensure mastery? Students were advanced at their own instructional level through the three phases of acquiring a reading skill: first, the cognitive phase, then the mastery phase, and finally the automaticity phase where the student performed without conscious attention. Components of reading addressed through the whole language or language experience approach were readiness, letter names, word recognition, print concepts, vocabulary, decoding, oral reading and comprehension.

The third solution strategy involved using organized games, creative play, and exercises to develop deficient skills in sensory, gross motor, and fine motor areas. Teachers were asked to carefully analyze the kinds of lessons they planned and taught for the students. By planning the lessons carefully and using the Grouping Guide (see Appendix B) each child could not only make gains in skill development but realize some degree of success, thereby reducing a negative self image and building a more positive attitude about school and learning (Alexander and Lovelace, 1988).

As children made progress in developing and refining the necessary skills, charts were kept to highlight each success. The use of stickers, stars and other rewards

stimulated a continued desire to succeed. Above all, praise from the teacher, the instructional aide and volunteer tutors provided encouragement.

The use of games and creative play was utilized in teaching numbers, letters, and letter sounds, and other academic skills. Some games were varied to increase or decrease the difficulty in addressing individual needs and/or learning styles. As students made progress and began to advance to higher cognitive skills, the use of games and play was decreased.

A final component of the solution strategy was parental involvement. This involvement was encouraged in order to extend skill development to the home with the hope that setting the stage for more quality parent/child interaction would be a fringe benefit. The processes for involving parents in active participation in their child's education has been addressed in other parts of this paper. However, basic components are identified at this point. First, regular meetings and/or contact with parents was a priority for the teachers involved in the practicum. The distribution of a parents' handbook (see Appendix C) at the orientation meeting provided insight and suggestions for parents of specific skills needed by their child and some activities that would help develop these. Another source of assistance for the interested parent was the calendar (see Appendix D) of suggested activities for the duration of the

practicum. The use of both the booklet and the calendar was explained to parents so that the effective use of these aids would be enhanced. Weekly reports (see Appendix E) were used to keep parents informed of pupil progress. Additional information was sent home in the form of informative letters (Appendix F).

These particular techniques were carefully selected for a number of reasons. First, many of the students who attend the school come from a low socio-economic background with limited background and experiences that would build readiness of the learning experience. Since research indicated that early identification is of paramount importance to the eventual success of the at risk student, the screening techniques selected identified the at risk student in the first grade. Because of the limited developmental experiences of the students in the school, the whole language (language experience) technique provided for the development of background and foundation for future learning. Finally, it was this writer's belief that real progress could be experienced by the child. This is especially true for the at risk student. Since many of the children involved in the practicum have low self-esteem, a continual reward system, both at school and home, played a vital role in the students' success.

Report of Action Taken

A variety of steps was taken in an effort to solve this problem. As a result, at risk students in the first grade of the school were identified and remediated in skill areas directly related to academic achievement.

Materials including word cards, learning games, activity sheets, rewards for incentive use, and equipment for gross and fine motor development were provided.

Adult participants including teachers, a teacher aide, and volunteer tutors were introduced to research and instructional strategies that would increase the possibility of academic success for first grade students. Through this training, they became aware that a conscious, concerted effort must be made to provide extra, specifically designed assistance for the students identified as at risk. They were guided in the use of an instrument for the early identification of these students and in selecting appropriate and effective teaching strategies to address the identified needs of the students. Finally, they were able to demonstrate the accuracy of their at risk student identification and ability to work within the solution strategy framework.

There was one elementary school in this practicum with 2 teachers, 1 instructional aide and 2 volunteer tutors participating. The time line for the implementation period was 12 weeks. Adult participants met with this writer on a

weekly basis and maintained telephone contact at any time a need arose.

The solution strategy began with a meeting of this writer, the principal and staff for orientation to the program's purpose. This was followed by inservice for the adult participants. Techniques in administering the Criteria For Readiness For First Grade Checklist (see Appendix A) and the MacMillan Pre-Primer End of Book Test were reviewed. Processes for interpreting test results to identify the potentially at risk students were discussed. Additional characteristics that could be observed and also used for this identification were included during the discussion.

Following the completion of the identification process, students identified as being potentially at risk of failure in first grade were placed in adjustable groups based on similarity of needs (see Appendix B). Students needing one-on-one assistance were also appropriately identified. Since the volunteers were strangers to the students, an introductory juice and cookie "munch" was arranged for this purpose.

Prior to the first session with the students, the adult participants were provided with the appropriate materials to address the students' skills identified as deficient and had become proficient in the use of the materials. These materials were used in addition to the whole language

strategy, for which they had also been trained.

Parent participation in the program was encouraged. After an initial introduction to the program's purpose, weekly progress reports and/or other forms of communication were used (see Appendix F). Two publications, the Parents' Handbook (see Appendix C) and the calendar of activities (see Appendix D) were provided for continuing skill building at home. These activities were also used to encourage parent/student interaction, a procedure severely lacking in the homes of the students represented in the practicum.

A weekly log was included in the practicum (see Appendix G). The log, kept by this writer, provided information on methods and materials used, positive results, negative results, teacher/tutor concerns and questions and other usable observations. This procedure provided the writer with a sequential record of all activities of the project as well as provided a valuable source of concerns to be addressed at weekly conferences with participants. The log also served as an ongoing evaluation of progress or lack of progress of the students.

Whole language development activities were used with the students with the major concepts being introduced by the teacher and follow up activities implemented by the auxiliary staff. Activities began with simple activities consisting of matching pictures with word cards, having students "brainstorm" words about a picture or event they

had observed or told the group about a pet (toy, game, etc.) they enjoyed. These activities were additionally stimulated by activities such as walks about the campus. Shy or immature students were encouraged to use puppets or to role play to decrease their fear of participation. As the practicum advanced, simple word associations progressed into the formation of sentences and eventually into simple stories about these pictures and activities. Word cards and sentence strips provided assistance in these activities.

Students demonstrating needs in the area of fine and gross motor development participated in activities and games involving running, jumping, hopping, skipping, cutting, following a line and other manipulations. A wide range of games and materials provided variety to these activities. The attitude of the students to participation in these activities were noted periodically to prevent boredom.

Approximately half of the way into the implementation period, students were rechecked for accurate placement in the program. This activity resulted in two students being moved out of the program because of obvious misplacement and one student, new to the school and meeting the qualifying criteria, was placed in the program.

Activities were carried out according to the time line of the practicum. Regular meetings with the staff, parent communication and classroom visits constituted an ongoing process for this writer. Increases or decreases in

difficulty addressed changing individual needs and/or learning styles. Those students found to be able continually addressed higher cognitive skills.

The auxiliary staff kept charts of notable accomplishments and effort on behalf of the students and appropriate rewards were provided by this writer. Adult participants were reminded of the value of incentive as a method of building higher self-esteem.

The culminating activity for the students was retesting using the original instrument, the Criteria For Readiness For First Grade Checklist and the end of the book test provided with the district's adopted basal series. Recommendations for instructional strategies to be continued with each student were made. A variety of rewards and recognitions were presented to each student.

The final meeting with the adult participants included a verbal evaluation of the activities, discussions of each child's progress and skill areas that were still deficient, as well as plans to extend the program to all first grade classes in the school year.

A concluding communication with parents determined the number of parents still involved, and offered suggestions for continued parental support of the children.

The final phase of the practicum was an evaluation of the total process. A comparison was made of the original list of students identified by teachers as being at risk to

the students involved in the practicum at its conclusion. Progress or lack of progress of individual students was studied using the grouping guides, weekly logs, and results of student performance on the two evaluative instruments used in the practicum.

CHAPTER V

Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

Results

Objective one was measured by comparing the original list of at risk students identified by the teacher to the list of students who were found to actually be at risk after testing and compiling data on specific needs deficiencies. The original list was compiled by the classroom teacher based on mastery levels of the students' kindergarten work, scores on end-of-year test in reading in kindergarten, teacher observations and the results of the Readiness For First Grade Placement Checklist. Any student meeting this criteria guideline was placed on the list of students classified as potentially at risk of failing first grade. After careful observations of the students and their work habits, as well as a careful study of the above test data by this writer, the list of at risk students was verified. The second list of at risk students was compiled based on an abbreviated retesting after the practicum was in progress. The checklist and reading test scores were the only components of the retesting.

The specific objective, "Two first grade teachers are able to identify at risk first grade students to the degree of 80% accuracy of the classroom at risk list" was met. The goal of 80% accuracy was met and exceeded to a degree of 91% accuracy. Using the checklist in addition to the

reading test data greatly increased the teachers' ability to identify students who were not developmentally ready in isolated areas for first grade requirements.

The second objective was for 11 parents or parent substitutes to become knowledgeable in how to work with an at risk student at home and was measured by the use of a weekly checklist of activities completed by the parents and students working together. After an initial introduction meeting, the parents were contacted each week to encourage their participation and/or to give reports on their child's progress. Parents who could not be reached by phone were contacted by mail. Specific assignments designed to enlist the parents' participation in their child's school work were sent home on a regular basis. This writer kept a log on these assignments and noted if they showed evidence of parent-student interaction, as well as any additional response the parents may have made. Conferences with parents were encouraged throughout the practicum.

The achievement of 80% participation at the end of the practicum was projected. This goal fell just short of the achievement goal as three parents did not remain active in the project or did not actively participate at all. A 73% participation rate was maintained until the practicum ended. Although this is 7% below the goal, the school average for parental participation is 20% to 25%. By comparison to the previous degree of participation school wide, 73%

represented a notable improvement.

The third and final objective was to increase the readiness for achievement in first grade for 11 at risk students. The objective was measured by comparing pre and post practicum data from the checklist as well as comparing the students' test scores on the end of year test provided by the basal reading series.

Whole language development activities were used extensively to give the children both beginning reading skills and positive attitudes toward the world of books and reading. Five steps were used in these activities: Preparing for dictation, taking dictation, reading the story, conducting follow-up activities and developing basic skills noted to be deficient. This process worked well in the setting for this practicum. In the beginning, the limited background of the students was very evident. To overcome this handicap, various objects, experiences, and ideas were provided as stimuli for oral language and lead to good dictated stories. Later in the practicum, students were able to express their own experiences more openly and fewer stimuli needed to be provided for them. One of the major successes of this practicum was the increase in the students' ability to express their own thoughts, both orally and in written form.

Once an experience story had been obtained, it was used as an opportunity to reinforce the sight vocabulary. Also,

regular lessons and activities in word attack skills and comprehension were planned as part of the follow-up for the experience stories. Using this strategy, the students' word bank soon grew from a very limited number of words to a very extensive number. Continual reinforcement of sight vocabulary, word attack skills, and comprehension proved to be a most important part of the whole language development process.

To further sensory and physical development, both indoor and outdoor activities were used. Simple task such as cutting and pasting progressed through task requirements for crayon and pencil activities for the development of fine motor skills. Three students showed need of gross motor development. This deficiency was addressed through exercise activities, games using large balls, and walking-skiping-jumping activities. Visual and auditory discrimination skills were developed using both teacher made and commercial materials.

At the beginning of the practicum, all children had more than 10% of the items checked on the readiness checklist and could not attain 70% mastery on the basal reading test. At the end of the practicum, all had attained at least 70% mastery on the basal end of book test.

Conclusions

Academic development relied heavily upon the whole

language approach. Experience chart stories, beginning with students creating their own stories with adult assistance, were a favorite activity among students and proved very successful. At the beginning of the practicum, no student would even attempt to write a sentence independently. By the end of the practicum four and five sentence stories (using inventive spelling) could be produced by 8 of the 11 students. The remaining 3 students could produce a sentence to describe a picture or an event. Skills in the areas of letter-sound association, rhyming sounds, beginning sounds, and positional concepts were taught using flash cards, tape recorders, and matching games. These activities were rotated frequently for variety and to maintain a high interest level. Students were rewarded at every opportunity for both success and genuine effort. These rewards consisted of stickers, privileges, and posted examples of good work. One especially successful activity was the "Pick of the Week" activity when a student was recognized for academic and behavioral improvements during the preceding week. This reward not only encouraged academic improvement but was a significant factor in the building of a more positive self-image. It is an activity that would be useful in a number of programs.

Another aspect of building self-confidence in the students was to make certain that every child was greeted each morning by name by the teacher and/or another

designated adult. Although this was not a directly measurable component, when the students were discussing the practicum with this writer each indicated a positive reaction to the greeting process. This writer concludes it to be a very worth while effort.

The three specific behavioral objectives, teachers accurately identifying at risk first grade students, parents becoming knowledgeable in how to work with at risk students at home, and students increasing their readiness for achievement in first grade, were met. The notable increase in parental participation compensated for not reaching the degree of parental participation by 7%.

One unexpected outcome of the practicum was the discovery by the adult participants that enjoyment of an activity and the feeling of success was very significant in how well a student accomplished the specific activity. Since this became evident early in the practicum, it became an integral part of every activity and, this writer feels, greatly enhanced the total experience.

Recommendations and Dissemination

Recommendations for the duplication of this study would be: 1) that the project encompass a longer period of time and 2) that alternative methods of obtaining parental involvement be considered. This writer will incorporate this practicum in every first grade class in the school

during the 1990-91 school year. This will also serve as a method of disseminating the practicum results. Having a working model in the district will provide opportunities for on-site visits by teachers and administrators from throughout the school district. These visits are now being scheduled by this writer and the opportunity has been met with positive results.

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NAME _____

CRITERIA FOR READINESS FOR FIRST GRADE PLACEMENTPersonal and Social Development:

- _____ has an attention span of less than 10 minutes
- _____ has difficulty following through with task
- _____ loses track of belongings
- _____ has immature language development
- _____ lacks self-confidence
- _____ cries easily and often
- _____ resists being separated from parent
- _____ falls out of chair frequently
- _____ is weak in school socialization skills such as:
 - _____ standing in line
 - _____ sitting quietly at circle time
 - _____ raising hand to speak
 - _____ taking turns

Sensory and Physical Development:

- _____ had underdeveloped visual discrimination skills
- _____ has poor auditory discrimination skills
- _____ has difficulty with fine motor tasks such as:
 - _____ crayon and pencil activities
 - _____ cutting and pasting
 - _____ tying, zippering, fastening clothing
- _____ has immature gross motor skills

Academic Development:

- _____ cannot recite the alphabet
- _____ cannot count objects past ten
- _____ has difficulty counting orally to twenty
- _____ does not recognize rhyming sounds
- _____ cannot match like beginning sounds
- _____ does not use capital and lower case letters appropriately in name
- _____ confuses positional concepts such as: behind, between, first, last

Cannot identify:

- _____ basic shapes
- _____ basic colors
- _____ letters of the alphabet
- _____ numerals to ten

NAME _____

CRITERIA FOR READINESS FOR FIRST GRADE PLACEMENTPersonal and Social Development:

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Cannot identify:

- _____ basic shapes
- _____ basic colors
- _____ letters of the alphabet
- _____ numerals to ten

APPENDIX B

65

GROUPING GUIDE

Children Who Need Practice

Session: _____

Date: _____

Identifying Shapes	Copying Shapes	Scissors, Manipulation	Cutting On A Line
Recognizing Numerals, 1 - 5	Recognizing Numerals, 6 - 10	Counting Objects To Ten	Identifying Basic Colors
Auditory Recall	Run	Jump	Hop
Visual Recall	Slide	Gallop	Skip

SCHOOL



WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

There seems to be a lot for a small child to learn. But parents can help. It is really only a question of where to begin and how to get started.

Teaching these skills does not require a rigid schedule or large blocks of time. In fact, readiness skills are best taught in small doses, with repetition over time, without pressure for you or your child.

No child will acquire every skill on the first try. The skills listed in this booklet are something to aim for with your child and not to be mastered immediately. The goal is not to speed up development, but to insure that every child has the best possible opportunity to learn and grow in each skill.

A good place to begin is with the day-to-day encouragement of parents, grandparents, caregivers, or older brothers and sisters.

Children learn best when they are active participants, or in other words, they learn by doing. They can also learn by playing. Make learning fun such as play a game with your child for them to learn a skill.

In teaching, it is important to remember that every child is different from every other child. We are teaching your child at his/her own pace. Have fun as you share the experience of learning with your child.





SKILLS FOR FIRST GRADE STUDENTS

SIZE

This group of skills includes basic discrimination of large and small, related size concepts, and matching based on size.

Activity

Take a walk around the yard or neighborhood with your child and look for objects to compare in size. Your child can find a big leaf and a small leaf, a tall tree and a short tree, a tall person and a short person, a big pet and a small pet.

Have ready a large and small empty box or bag. Find two each of several objects, one big and one small; for example, an adult-size shoe and a small child's shoe; a big and a small ball; a small spoon and a large spoon. Put all the objects in a pile. Help your child find two that are similar and then place the big object in the big box and the small one in the small box. Continue until all are sorted.

COLOR AND SHAPE

70

This skill requires the child to be able to recognize and name basic colors and shapes that may be seen in the world around them.

Activity

Go for a color walk with your child. Look for as many things of one color as possible.

Play the color seek game. Have a contest with your child to see who can see a certain color first.

Help your child find various shapes around the house, such as rectangle (window, door, table top, TV screen) or circles (clock, skillet, wheels, plates, etc). You may combine this activity with the color activity from above by finding a red circle, a blue rectangle, or other combinations.

NUMBERS

Numbers are important in reading activities so the child can find the correct page in a book and other related activities.

Activity

In the bottom of each pocket of an empty egg carton, place different quantities of paper pieces, rocks, buttons, or other objects that will fit. Ask your child to count the number in each pocket. You may later want your child to be able to tell you which of two pockets contain the most pieces.

Make a game of matching objects of equal numbers. An example of this would be one plate on the table must have one glass to go with it. Another example would be one foot with one sock, or one glove with five finger spaces and one hand with five fingers.





READINESS TO READ

It is often said that a child's overall success in school and later life is directly related to his/her success in reading. This group of skills include basic vocabulary, verbal expression, awareness of letters, speaking in sentences, story comprehension and storytelling, awareness of books and printed words, and related writing readiness skills, all of which contribute to a successful start in reading.

Activity

Play "Simon Says" with your child by having him touch different things around him inside the house and outside the house. Later have him touch things that he cannot name and you say the word for him. Add, "Simon says, say ____" and name the word for him to repeat.

Write the word for things in the house that your child may have trouble naming. Stick the name tag to the times and ask the child to repeat the name for you at various times.

Make a habit of printing your child's name on coats, books, and pictures that belong to the child. Each time, point out the first letter and the last letter in the name, and later have the child repeat the letters after you. If the name has two letters alike, point this out.

Have your child find letters in his name in food labels, signs, magazine titles, and newspaper headlines.

Find a magazine picture that shows one or more children engaged in an interesting activity. Encourage your child to tell about what is happening in the picture. If you repeat this activity several times, using different pictures, you can encourage your child to notice more details in the picture, to add imaginative touches, and to talk about how the people in the picture feel.

As you read a favorite book, encourage your child to participate, first by joining in on favorite refrains, then by talking with you about what is happening in the pictures. When the story is very familiar, let your child "read" the story to you by looking at the pictures and telling what he remembers.

POSITION AND DIRECTION

This group of skills includes work meanings, relative position, left-to-right and top-middle-bottom progression, and additional descriptive language, including opposites.

Activity

Make a game of having your child follow simple directions using the words in, out, over, under, front, back, up, and down. For example, hold the ball over your head. Walk up the steps. Stand behind the chair.

Cut out magazine pictures of animals and vehicles that are either fast or slow. Help your child sort the pictures into a fast pile and a slow pile. The same may be done with food or weather that is cold and hot.



TIME

This group of skills helps the child understand time of day, year, and special days like birthdays, and special holidays.

Look through some magazines with your child for pictures that show daytime and nighttime activities. Help your child find clues in the picture that show what time of day it is, for example, people eating breakfast, lunch, or dinner; the sun or the moon and stars; bright or dark sky.

LISTENING AND SEQUENCING

This group of skills includes sound recognition, simple sequences, story recall, and paying attention.

Activity

Go for a listening walk with your child. Listen for very quiet sounds or very loud sounds. Be sure to help your child notice where the sounds come from. When you return, talk about the sounds you heard and make a game of seeing how many you and your child can remember.

Read a favorite story to your child. Afterward, ask such questions as "What happened first?" "What happened next?" "What happened last?"

This group of skills includes large-muscle activities involving the entire body, such as jumping, hopping, and throwing a ball, and small-muscle activities, such as coloring, cutting, drawing, and buttoning and zipping.

Activity

You can find toys that help teach these skills. But if you prefer, make your own learning toy. Attach these items to a board: a shoe for lacing, a zipper cut from an old pair of pants, a row of buttons and buttonholes from a shirt, and a belt or small dog collar for buckling.

Have your child imitate various animals by jumping like a kangaroo, rabbit, or frog. Have your child jump over the cracks in the sidewalk, or walk straight down this line. Have the child jump and hop to different tempos of music.



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Many of the social and emotional skills can be learned with a parent's or caregiver's help through daily practice and encouragement. This group of skills includes both self-help, such as caring for belongings, knowing full name and address, and working independently; and behavior that help children get along with others, such as sharing and taking turns.

Activity

Print the numbers on a piece of cardboard to show your child his or her address or phone number. Help your child trace them with a finger and repeat them. Have your child copy the numbers with a crayon on paper or with chalk on a chalkboard.

Frequent visits with family friends can help your child feel confident with other adults. Take your child with you to stores, the post office, or the bank so that he or she will meet new people and hear you talk with them.

Give your child special jobs to do, and praise him or her afterwards, even if the job is not perfect. Possible chores including setting the table, dusting low, easy-to-reach places, and putting things away. Do not ask a young child to clean his or her room alone for they will not know where to begin. Give them one task at the time until they have completed the job to be done.





HELP YOUR CHILD LOOK FORWARD TO SCHOOL

Be positive about school and teachers. When you talk about your child's school, be cheerful and confident.

Try to invite one or two of your child's classmates over to play.

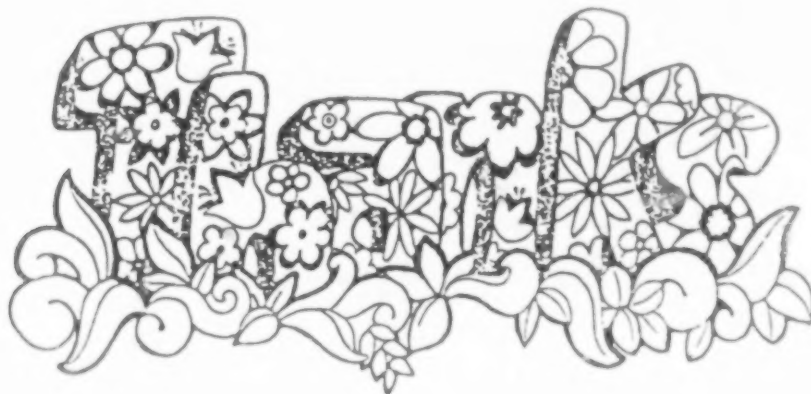
Visit your child's school often for positive reasons.

Try to answer your child's question about school in a positive manner.

Let your child see you read, tell stories, and do other things associated with school.

Consistent discipline at home will help your child settle down to the task of learning at school.

In the chart that follows, skills your child needs to be successful in first grade are organized into groups. Try to work with your child on the skills that he or she cannot perform well. If you do not understand how to do this your child's teacher will be glad to help you.



In the chart below, these skills are organized into the nine groupings discussed:

SIZE

- Understands big and little
- Understands long and short
- Matches shapes or objects based on size

COLORS AND SHAPES

- Recognizes and names primary colors
- Recognizes circles
- Recognizes rectangles
- Matches shapes or objects based on shape
- Copies shapes

NUMBERS

- Counts orally through 10
- Counts objects in one-to-one correspondence
- Understands empty and full
- Understands more and less

READING READINESS

- Remembers objects from a given picture
- Knows what a letter is
- Has been read to frequently
- Has been read to daily
- Looks at books or magazines
- Recognizes some nursery rhymes
- Identifies parts of the body
- Identifies objects that have a functional use
- Knows common farm and zoo animals
- Pronounces own first name
- Pronounces own last name
- Expresses self verbally
- Identifies other children by name
- Tells the meaning of simple words
- Repeats a sentence of 6-8 words
- Completes incomplete sentence with proper word
- Has own books
- Understands that print carries a message
- Pretends to read
- Uses left-to-right progression
- Answers questions about a short story
- Tells the meaning of words heard in story
- Looks at pictures and tells a story
- Identifies own first name in manuscript
- Prints own first name

POSITION AND DIRECTION

- Understands up and down
- Understands in and out

Understands front and back
 Understands over (on) and under
 Understands top, bottom, middle
 Understands beside and next to
 Understands hot and cold
 Understands fast and slow

TIME

Understands day and night
 Knows age and birthday

LISTENING AND SEQUENCING

Follows simple directions
 Listens to a short story
 Listens carefully
 Recognizes common sounds
 Repeats a sequence of sounds
 Repeats a sequence of orally-given numbers
 Retells simple stories in sequence

MOTOR SKILLS

Is able to run
 Is able to walk a straight line
 Is able to jump
 Is able to hop
 Is able to alternate feet walking downstairs
 Is able to march
 Is able to stand on one foot 5-10 seconds
 Is able to walk backwards for five feet
 Is able to throw a ball
 Pastes objects
 Claps hands
 Matches simple objects
 Touches fingers
 Able to button
 Builds with blocks
 Completes simple puzzles (5 pcs. or less)
 Draws and colors beyond a simple scribble
 Able to zip
 Controls pencil and crayon well
 Cuts simple shapes
 Handles scissors well
 Able to copy simple shapes

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Can be away from parents for 2-3 hours
 without being upset
 Takes care of toilet needs independently
 Feels good about self
 Is not afraid to go to school
 Cares for own belongings
 Knows full name
 Dresses self

Knows how to use a handkerchief or tissue
Knows own sex
Brushes teeth
Crosses a residential street safely
Asks to go to school
Knows parents' names
Knows home address
Knows home phone number
Enters into dinner table conversation
Carries a plate of food
Maintains self-control
Gets along well with other children
Recognizes authority
Shares with others
Talks easily
Likes teachers
Meets visitors without shyness
Puts away toys
Able to stay on a task
Able to work independently
Helps family with chores



January 1990



SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2 Use old wrap- ping paper to help your child make a tear picture.	3 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	4 Use empty shoe boxes to make storage space for small toys.	5 Walk around the block with your child to find tall things.	6
7	8 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	9 Use egg carton to sort items into groups of two. Use nuts, fruit loops, etc.	10 Pick an object and say, "I see a color and the color is ____". Have the child guess the item.	11 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	12 Blindfold the child. Ask him to point in the direction of a sound he heard. (bell, hand clap)	13
14	15 DR. MLK DAY	16 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	17 Talk about animals. Have old magazines to find pic- tures of the animal.	18 Have your child clap his hands to a pattern after you clap the pattern.	19 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	20
21	22 Have your child copy these shapes on paper. Try other simple shapes. ○ □ △	23 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	24 Find three buttons or pencils one color. Have child pick out sets of three other things alike.	25 Have child point to and name different parts of his body.	26 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	27
28	29 Collect pic- tures of things that rhyme: bat/cat, pan/fan	30 Have child put a small toy under, over, beside, in, or behind some- thing.	31 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.			

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

APPENDIX D



February 1990



SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

				1 Cut an apple into half. Show child that two halves make one whole. Have child say term one half.	2 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	3
4	5 Describe an object in the room. Have the child guess what it is using your clues.	6 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	7 Find buttons or pencils of three different colors. Have child look at them, take them away and have him repeat colors.	8 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	9 Draw these shapes and have child copy them.	10
11	12 Look at a picture. Have child speak one sentence about the picture.	13 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	14 Play game with you saying, "I see something yellow (blue, red, etc.) Have child guess object."	15 Take a walk with your child. Have him tell you all the sounds he hears.	16 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	17
18	19 Have your child open and close a door, his mouth, etc. to demonstrate open and close.	20 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	21 Use pencils, etc., to have your child count out numbers as you call them out.	22 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	23 Use cups, spoons, balls, etc., have child pick out big and small.	24
25	26 Read to your child for 10 or 15 minutes.	27 Throw a ball to your child. Use different size balls, then stand different distances away.	28 Read a story to your child. Have him raise his hand each time he hears a word like boy, dog, etc.			



March 1990



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

				1 Have your child walk a line in the sidewalk, hop on one foot, jump on two feet, etc. until he does it well.	2 Take a walk with your child to find things that are living.	3
4	5 Read to your child. Have him retell the story to you.	6 Look at a picture. Have your child tell you three things about the picture.	7 Give your child some directions. Have him tell you what you said first, next, last.	8 Read your child a story. Ask one question about what the story said.	9 Use pipe cleaners or twigs to drop on the floor. Have the child pick up one at a time without moving any others.	10
11	12 Read your child a story. Have him tell what happened first and last.	13 Count slowly from 1-5 leaving out one number. Have child tell missing number.	14 Paste a picture from 1-5 leaving on a piece of cardboard. Cut into 5 pieces. Have child put it back together.	15 Read a story to your child. Have him tell 3 things that happened in the story.	16 Tell child to do 3 things: clap, jump, sit. Have child do them in order given.	17
18	19 Help your child write his name, address, and phone number.	20 Take your child on a walk. Find things that show spring is here.	21 Have your child draw a picture showing one thing about a story you have just read to him.	22 Say a word to your child. Have him say a word that rhymes with the word you said.	23 Read part of a story to your child. Have him finish the story by making up an ending.	24
25	26 Make some short sentences. Make some silly. Have child tell which are silly and which are real.	27 Read your child's favorite story.	28 Teach your child to jump rope or jump over a low object.	29 Help your child name the days of the week.	30 Help your child make a job list of things for him to be responsible for doing on a regular basis.	31

APPENDIX E

WEEKLY REPORT

84

WEEKLY REPORT

Name _____ Teacher _____
Session Number _____ Overall Progress _____

Legend: M=Mastered A=Achieving I=Improving R=Refused

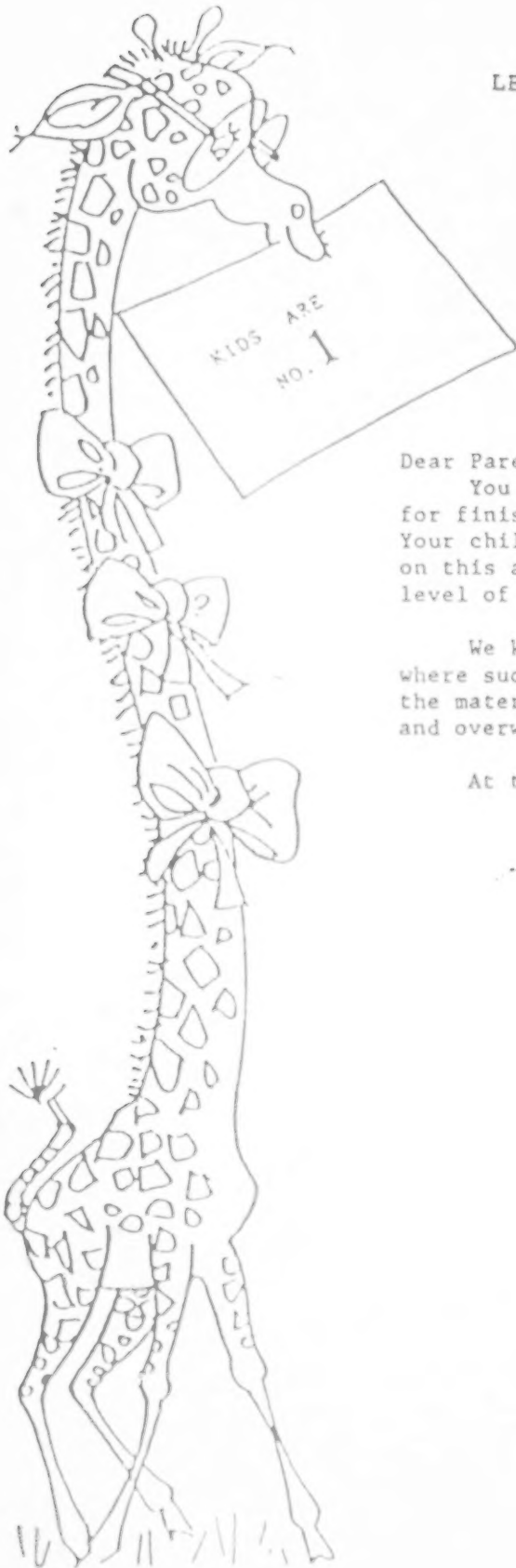
Cooperates quickly and cheerfully				
Gets along well with others				
Takes turns without prompting				
Finishes what he/she starts				
Returns books and papers to their proper place				
Actively participates in classroom activities				
Participates in group discussions				
Is able to follow directions				
Can cut along a line				
Can copy a : cross				
circle				
square				
triangle				
rectangle				
Has good auditory memory				
Has good visual memory				
Can recognize numerals 1 - 50				
Can count objects to 10				
Identifies: left and right				
largest and smallest				
tallest and shortest				
same and different				
over and under				

APPENDIX F

LETTERS TO PARENTS

86

Date _____



Dear Parents,

You can be very proud of _____
for finishing _____.
Your child has just met or exceeded the desired score
on this activity. He/She will now move to the next
level of activities in our class.

We know that learning is a building process
where success at one level is necessary before mastering
the materials at hand would only serve to frustrate
and overwhelm a struggling student.

At this point in the program, your child is:

working at grade level.

working one level below grade level
but making satisfactory progress.

working below standards. We will continue
to monitor his/her work and keep you
informed.

Professionally,



Dear Parents:

_____ is reading more words every day.

Below are some of the new words he/she is learning.

saw	just
fly	fun
good	red
up	but
green	old
down	town
back	her
morning	someone

Suggestion: Make your child a wall chart with the new words that he/she is learning. Each day, ask if he/she has learned a new word in reading. Put a star by each new word they can say.

Thank you for your support of our school's effort to teach your child. Remember, education is the way up, and the way toward a better life as an adult.

Your child's teacher,

 Date

Dear Parents,

You can be very proud of _____
 for finishing _____.
 Your child has just met or exceeded the desired score
 on this activity. He/She will now move to the next
 level of activities in our class.

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 success at one level is necessary before mastering
 the materials at hand would only serve to frustrate
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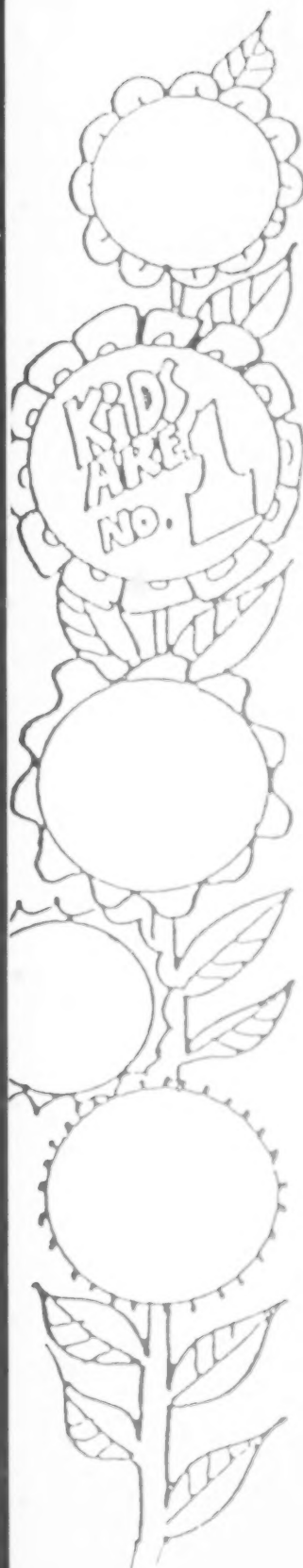
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Professionally,



STUDENT-PARENT ACTIVITIES

90

Dear Parents:

Some parents express a desire to help their child in reading. This letter includes some suggestions on how you can help your child comprehend or understand what he reads. You will notice the ideas can be used in informal situations without turning your home into a model school. I hope you enjoy using using these activities with your child. Be patient and praise your child as you have fun together. If you would like additional ideas, please contact me.

1. Twenty Photos and You

Pictures can be used to teach comprehension by providing subject matter which interests the child and stimulates their thinking.

- a. Select a family photo and ask the child to look at it for one minute. Turn the photo face down and ask the child to write or tell you at least 10 different details about the picture. Continue this activity using different pictures.
- b. Classify the photos by putting them in stacks, those that have animals, those that have adults, those that are outdoors, etc.
- c. Choose at least 10 photos you think you could put a title to. Your titles should express the main idea that the pictures communicate to you. Write the titles on a card and ask your child to match the title card to a picture.

2. Reading Recipes

Reading recipes and cooking is a delightful way to encourage growth in comprehension skills, as well as providing an incentive to read for otherwise reluctant readers.

- a. The ability to follow directions is a skill easily taught by the preparation of food. Following directions in preparing food becomes a highly realistic enterprise, quite unlike an exercise in a workbook. It allows a child to see a real need to follow step-by-step directions.
- b. The ability to make inferences and draw conclusions can be developed if skillful questioning techniques are used:
 - 1) "What would happen if."
 - 2) "Why did it happen?"
 - 3) "How do you know....."
- c. Once recipes have been read, enjoyed, and cooked, they can be duplicated, cut apart, and used for sequencing activities. Begin with very simple ones and allow the child to arrange the steps in the order that they happened in the kitchen.

Dear Parent:

_____ is learning more every day at school. Some vocabulary words your child is learning are listed below. You can help by letting him/her practice saying the words with you.

Mother	Tina	and	Daddy	ride
come	Patty	Janet	go	walk
Mark	jump	see	David	would

Your child is anxious to show what has been learned at school. I realize that you, the parents, do make a difference in education. Perhaps you would like to use some of the following activities with your child.

- a. Encourage your child to describe an object for you (tell all about it...size, color, shape, use, etc.).
- b. Play games with rhyming words. See how many words you can think of together that rhyme with a simple word such as hat, dog, or sun.
- c. Read to your child often and let him/her see you read. By setting this example, your child will learn that reading is important.

Thank you for joining with me in trying to provide a substantial and rewarding foundation in reading. What better gift can we give your child?

Your child's teacher,

Dear Parents:

Some parents express a desire to help their child in reading. This letter includes some suggestions on how you can help your child comprehend or understand what he reads. You will notice the ideas can be used in informal situations without turning your home into a model school. I hope you enjoy using these activities with your child. Be patient and praise your child as you have fun together. If you would like additional ideas, please contact me.

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- c. Once recipes have been read, enjoyed, and cooked, they can be duplicated, cut apart, and used for sequencing activities. Begin with very simple ones and allow the child to arrange the steps in the order that they happened in the kitchen.



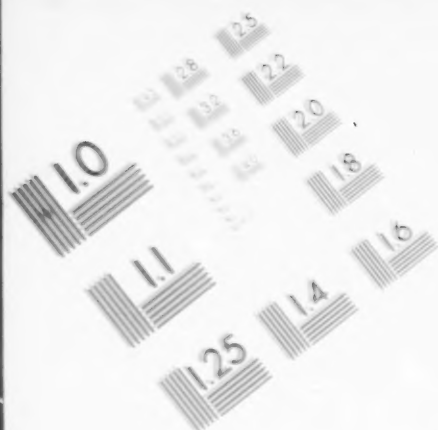
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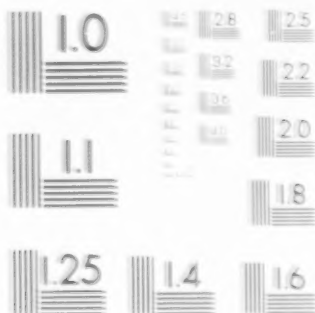
(301) 587-8202



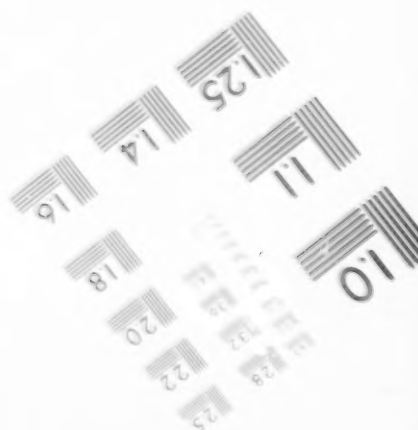
Centimeter



Inches



MANUFACTURED TO AIM STANDARDS
BY APPLIED IMAGE, INC.



Dear Parent:

_____ is learning more every day at school. Some vocabulary words your child is learning are listed below. You can help by letting him/her practice saying the words with you.

Mother	Tina	and	Daddy	ride
come	Patty	Janet	go	walk
Mark	jump	see	David	would

Your child is anxious to show what has been learned at school. I realize that you, the parents, do make a difference in education. Perhaps you would like to use some of the following activities with your child.

- a. Encourage your child to describe an object for you (tell all about it...size, color, shape, use, etc.).
- b. Play games with rhyming words. See how many words you can think of together that rhyme with a simple word such as hat, dog, or sun.
- c. Read to your child often and let him/her see you read. By setting this example, your child will learn that reading is important.

Thank you for joining with me in trying to provide a substantial and rewarding foundation in reading. What better gift can we give your child?

Your child's teacher,

APPENDIX H

95

WEEKLY LOG

Group _____ Date: _____ Week: _____

1. Materials used:
2. Methods used:
3. Positive results:
4. Negative results:
5. Teacher/tutor questions and concerns:
6. Other observations:

APPENDIX I

PRE AND POST TEST SCORES

97

NAME _____ (Date: 1-8-90)

CRITERIA FOR READINESS FOR FIRST GRADE PLACEMENT

Personal and Social Development:

- 6 has an attention span of less than 10 minutes
- 9 has difficulty following through with task
- 3 loses track of belongings
- 5 has immature language development
- 8 lacks self-confidence
- 1 cries easily and often
- 0 resists being separated from parent
- 1 falls out of chair frequently
- is weak in school socialization skills such as:
 - 6 standing in line
 - 7 sitting quietly at circle time
 - 7 raising hand to speak
 - 4 taking turns

Sensory and Physical Development:

- 4 had underdeveloped visual discrimination skills
- 10 has poor auditory discrimination skills
- has difficulty with fine motor tasks such as:
 - 10 crayon and pencil activities
 - 8 cutting and pasting
 - 3 tying, zippering, fastening clothing
- 4 has immature gross motor skills

Academic Development:

- 3 cannot recite the alphabet
- 0 cannot count objects past ten
- 2 has difficulty counting orally to twenty
- 5 does not recognize rhyming sounds
- 6 cannot match like beginning sounds
- 2 does not use capital and lower case letters appropriately in name
- 8 confuses positional concepts such as: behind, between, first, last

Cannot identify:

- 2 basic shapes
- 0 basic colors
- 4 letters of the alphabet
- 0 numerals to ten

* Numbers represent students deficient in skill

NAME _____ (Date: 3-19-90)

CRITERIA FOR READINESS FOR FIRST GRADE PLACEMENTPersonal and Social Development:

- 2 has an attention span of less than 10 minutes
- 1 has difficulty following through with task
- 1 loses track of belongings
- 1 has immature language development
- 1 lacks self-confidence
- 0 cries easily and often
- 0 resists being separated from parent
- 0 falls out of chair frequently
- 0 is weak in school socialization skills such as:
 - 0 standing in line
 - 0 sitting quietly at circle time
 - 0 raising hand to speak
 - 0 taking turns

Sensory and Physical Development:

- 0 had underdeveloped visual discrimination skills
- 3 has poor auditory discrimination skills
- 0 has difficulty with fine motor tasks such as:
 - 2 crayon and pencil activities
 - 1 cutting and pasting
 - 0 tying, zippering, fastening clothing
- 1 has immature gross motor skills

Academic Development:

- 0 cannot recite the alphabet
- 0 cannot count objects past ten
- 0 has difficulty counting orally to twenty
- 0 does not recognize rhyming sounds
- 0 cannot match like beginning sounds
- 0 does not use capital and lower case letters appropriately in name
- 0 confuses positional concepts such as: behind, between, first, last
- Cannot identify:
 - 0 basic shapes
 - 0 basic colors
 - 0 letters of the alphabet
 - 0 numerals to ten

* Numbers represent students deficient in skill

READING TEST SCORES

MCMILLAN SERIES

Students	*Mastery of Pre-Primer Skills	Mastery of Primer Skills
1	70%	75%
2	74%	89%
3	74%	91%
4	71%	87%
5	78%	93%
6	72%	90%
7	79%	94%
8	75%	80%
9	80%	89%
10	70%	91%
11	77%	98%

* 70% mastery is required to move to the next reading level

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Education
Research and
Improvement (OERI)

ERIC

Date Filmed

March 29, 1991